February 21, 20013

Dear Parents / Guardians:

Conferences are an important tool for communication.  Now that I have settled in a little, I would like to share a couple of items relating to middle school reading that I think will be beneficial to you as parents to help in the learning process of your son / daughter.  The information below may be different than I have previously discussed with you as each day the students and I continue to find a way to make the information below most beneficial, efficient, and practical.

**Reading Wiki Page**:

The reading wiki page is intended to be used as a ***back – up tool*** for you to gain access to much of the information that is sent home with your son / daughter. Hard copies are sent home with your child and provide the expected form of communication of academic information. While convenient, the wiki page will not always be completely accurate or up-to-date. It is important that children are held responsible for delivering their own assignments and changes to those assignments. This is an important role of responsibility in the development of middle school children. The ultimate responsibility of access to information lies with your son / daughter.

*In order to access the wiki pages, go to the school web page, clink on academics, clink on Middle School Reading and English, click on Mr. Zastrow’s wiki, and clink on the address that corresponds with the grade level your child is in.  Once you connect to that site, all the titles on the left hand side link to pages connected with the materials being studied / read in class.  I have also included the direct address below as links.*

6th Grade - [http://sbread6.wikispaces.com/](http://sbread6.wikispaces.com/home)

7th Grade - [http://sbread7.wikispaces.com/](http://sbread7.wikispaces.com/home)

8th Grade - [http://sbread8.wikispaces.com/](http://sbread8.wikispaces.com/home)

**Edmodo:**

Edmodo is a tool that I use with students primarily for communication purposes.  Students can send messages back and forth with me to communicate on a variety of student needs.  Please encourage your students to take advantage of this option if they have questions or concerns.  Please also realize that students can post assignments here if a printer is broken or out of ink.  The students can also post something to Edmodo and print it off on one of the school printers.  Finally, the most important benefit of Edmodo is that it allows students who are sick or on vacation the opportunity to find out exactly what we did during class that day so they can do it at home and not have to play catch up when they return to school.  All they have to do is send a direct message to me asking what we did in class and I will send them the necessary Information

**Test Scores and Data, what does it Mean?:**

The school has released a letter explaining the new interpretation of test scores statewide.  If you have questions or concerns, I would be more than willing to answer them to the best of my ability.

**Reading Connections**:

This is a tool provided by the school.  Go to the school home page.  Under Quick links, click on Reading Connections for a link to monthly newsletters about important information related to how you can help connect to the reading your children are doing at home.

**Summer Recommendations:**

Summer Reading is an important activity as it enhances the foundation / base of abilities for your child in the area of reading.  It is my firm belief that students should read for 15 minutes a day throughout the summer.  This helps maintain the growth of the previous school year and encourages a lifelong habit of reading for enjoyment.  This reading time can occur in a variety of forms from the sports section of the newspaper to a favorite book to a favorite magazine, etc.

**Achieve 3000 (another option)**

Achieve 3000 is the leader in differentiated instruction. This web – based proven solutions otherwise known as TeenBiz3000 (grades 6-8) improves reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and writing skills for all. Based on decades of scientific research, the solutions are proven to dramatically increase student Lexile levels and high-stakes testing performance. All student at Stone bank School (in middle school) Have an account and can work on this at their leisure if they so desire. It is a great tool that students should take advantage of as much as possible.

While the above option often works for many, it is not the only solution.  Some students need the structured environment of a school setting to be successful.  Therefore, it is never too early to start thinking about summer school if your son / daughter fits into this category.  Summer school flyers are available, and I strongly recommend any class that helps to maintain the skills of reading in the months away from school

**It doesn’t matter where or when your child is reading this summer, but it does matter that they are reading to maintain their skills and be prepared for the 2013 – 2014 school year.**

If you have any questions / concerns, feel free to contact me 9contact information listed below) for further information.

[g.zastrow@stonebank.k12.wi.us](mailto:g.zastrow@stonebank.k12.wi.us)

262-966-2900 EXT 3060